



**New River/Desert Hills
Community Association, Inc.**
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Chris Horyza
Phoenix Field Office
21605 N. 7th Ave.
Phoenix, AZ 85027

Dear Chris,

We have enclosed a summary of information that our NR-DHCA Land Use Committee collected from New River area residents (includes the New River and Desert Hills communities) concerning the Bradshaw-Harquahala Planning Area. This summary represents our input to the “scoping” process. We want to continue our involvement to ensure that we have a shared vision/plan. Please consider having a representative from our association as you consider various land management scenarios for the area.

The New River/Desert Hills Community Association, Inc. (NR/DHCA) is dedicated to the preservation of our Community and its life style as described by the Maricopa County Land Use Plan, New River Planning Area. We collaborate with governmental entities by listening, collecting information, and sharing our community’s opinions. We hold our general member meetings on the second Tuesday of each month at the Desert Valley Baptist Church, 42425 N. New River Rd., New River. Meetings start at 7:30 PM. We invite your participation to present updates and to receive community feedback.

As the enclosed summary supports, our top recommendations are:

- Preserve the scenic and recreational value of the land
- Remove all lands currently designated as “disposable” from that list (except the small parcel being transferred to Maricopa County for the New River Kiwanis club and Senior Center.
- Ensure there is free public access to BLM land (including across private lands)
- Preserve the wildlife and vegetation of the area
- Protect the watershed and our water sources
- Protect and preserve cultural and/or historical value

Thank you for your efforts to keep us informed and we look forward to continuing our collaborative relationship.

Sincerely yours,

Ann Hutchinson, President
New River/Desert Hills Community Association, Inc

cc: Andy Kunasek (Maricopa County District 3 Supervisor)

Enclosure

New River/Desert Hills Community Association, Inc. (NR/DHCA)

Bradshaw Foothills Area Land Use Opinion Survey and Data Collection Results

Prepared by: NR/DHCA Land Use Committee:
Shareen Goodroad, Chairperson
Connie Crandell
Emily Lane

November 8, 2002

Purpose:

To document and provide the U.S. Dept. of Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Phoenix Field Office data and testimony collected from the residents in the New River area (includes New River and Desert Hills communities) relevant to the BLM Resource Management Plans being conducted for the Aqua Fria National Monument and the Bradshaw-Harquahala Planning Areas. This document is provided as part of BLM's planning effort that is currently in the initial public comment or "scoping phase" of development, which ends November 15, 2002

Introduction:

A Bradshaw Foothills Area Land Use Opinion survey was developed by the NR/DHCA (see Attachment "A") in conjunction with the planning effort being made in this area by the BLM. A public meeting was held on September 10, 2002 by the NR/DHCA at Desert Valley Baptist Church. Over 30 people were in attendance. Keynote speakers at this meeting were Chris Horyza, BLM Phoenix Field Office Planning Coordinator and Randy Goodfriend, Black Canyon City Community Association (BCCCA), Land Use Committee chairperson (see Attachment B). The BLM distributed Arizona Planning Bulletins (September 2002, Vol. 1), planning worksheets for the two areas, and notice of public "scoping meetings." NR/DHCA's opinion surveys were also distributed at this time.

In addition to attending the scoping meeting in Black Canyon City on October 2, the NR/DHCA gave presentations to the Kiwanis Club of New River on September 18 (approximately 70 people in attendance) and the Golden K on October 3 (approximately 30 people in attendance) at the New River Senior Center. The BLM planning bulletins, worksheets and the NR/DHCA opinion survey were distributed at both meetings. Also written notices of the BLM's public "scoping meetings" were distributed. Surveys, bulletins, and worksheets were also posted/distributed at the local businesses, schools, and commercial/retail centers in the two communities.

Results:

A total of 47 households completed surveys, which were received by the NR/DHCA prior to November 1, from residents through the U.S. postal service, via conversations (face-to-face, community meetings, or telephone), and by electronic mail. The following results have been compiled in a manner consistent with the survey format representing a total of over 329.67 years of life experience in the New River-Desert Hills area. Please note that the percentages assigned will exceed 100% because of over-lapping concerns and that the categories are generalized for this reason.

1. What do you value about these public lands and why?

- **94% of survey respondents spoke to the scenic value of the area.** Comments such as, "... the beauty and openness that is unique and special", the "views of openness and nature", "lack of development - land and its resources are not abused", "wide open spaces", "scenic views", "scenery not marred by growth; not surrounded by a sea of houses" and "their inherent beauty and uniqueness; we have a one-of-a kind landscape in the Sonoran desert" were the most common responses.
- **88% of respondents replied that nature - specifically the wildlife and vegetation that inhabit this area** - is an important aspect of these public lands. Frequent comments included, "Wildlife; balance of nature and health of land", "diversity of wildlife/vegetation", "the natural beauty", the "quiet, peaceful atmosphere [of nature]", "watching all the desert animals", and "nature/wildlife" supporting the conclusion that the "wild animals and plants" in this area are important to the residents and worth protecting and preserving in their natural environment.
- **33% cited both recreation and public access** as being of value to them. "Recreational activities", "horse trails", "ability to get out of the city", "access to public land", "off-road trails", "lots of existing trails and roads there since early mining days giving access to enjoying jeeping, horseback or dirt bike riding over beautiful public land", and because they are "open to the public", were all mentioned by respondents.
- **28% noted cultural and/or historical value and the need to preserve this legacy** in responses such as, "Indian ruins," "heritage" and "protecting these lands for future generations."
- **11% listed water and or the watershed** as being of value to them in comments like "protection of our water supply," "we are on wells and depend on a healthy aquifer" and "important watershed for this area".

2. What activities or uses do you NOT want on these public lands and why?

- **94% of respondents listed development** in some form (whether it be commercial, industrial, residential and/or development of any kind) as an unacceptable land use for this area. This was evidenced by comments such as, "[any] development that prevents us from enjoying the views and the wildlife," "...want this land kept natural", "no trades of parts," and "no building." This is a difficult category to capture because of the over-lapping nature of the responses, but a conservative estimate is as follows:
 - **39% mention residential development** in comments such as, "no high-density housing", "[no] housing developments", "[no] large, residential developments", "no houses", "[no] subdivisions", "[no] more homes", and "[no] residential communities; with their plants, pools and lights".
 - **28% specifically refer to commercial and/or industrial development** in responses like; "as little commercial/industrial use as possible," "no commercial endeavors," and "no commercial/industrial uses."

- **17% cite destruction and loss of wildlife habitat** in statements such as, "Wildlife; why do we keep pushing them out of their habitat?"
- **11% mention mining in particular** in statements such as, "[no] commercial mining; erosion, noise and air pollution plus depletion of precious natural resources," and [no] commercial mining; ruining vegetation and mountains".
- **11% note water availability** as a concern along with development. Comments included, "[does not want] anything that endangers/reduces the water supply" and "water problems."
- **44% listed off-road vehicles (ORV's)** as something they do not want at all or as something that should be restricted; specific mentions of this include, "uncontrolled motorized vehicles - scars the land", "no off-road motorized vehicles", "unregulated off-road development of trails", "ORV's, dirt bikes, motorcycles", "ORV - leads to erosion, noise and air pollution and potential fires from accidents or mechanical failure", "no race tracks", and "land torn-up by quads and dirt bikes".
- **17% of respondents considered public access** to these lands a problem and said they did not want "properties that become land-locked" and to be faced with "no trespassing signs".
- **17% also said that trash and litter is a problem.** Specifically, they said no to "dump sites", "target sites" and to "trash" in general.
- **11% note that they did not want "destruction of cultural and historical sites"** and that they indicated that these sites "needed to be protected to begin to understand their significance" and the need to "preserve the history of those who were here first."
- **5% pointed to "over-grazing"** as an unacceptable situation on public lands.
- **5% said "hunting"** is something that they didn't want because "the animals have a hard enough time surviving" with all the other threats to wildlife on public lands.

3. **Check the activities/uses that you have been involved with on these lands. (Listed here in order of rank.)**

- 89% - Wildlife Viewing
- 67% - Photography, Historical Sites, Camping
- 56% - Hiking
- 50% - Picnicking
- 44% - Star gazing/amateur astronomy, Plinking/target shooting, Equestrian, Native Sites
- 39% - Off-road vehicle, Bird watching
- 28% - Quad/dirt bike riding, Hunting, Nature walks - educational
- 22% - Fishing, Recreational prospecting/mining, Rock hounding/gathering, Sunbathing
- 11% - Scouting events, Swimming
- 6% - Mountain biking, Other (Exercising dog)

Please note that none of the respondents checked grazing, commercial mining or plant gathering for specimens/subsistence as an activity that they participated in.

4. Additional/other comments? (Comments are listed random order.)

- "Preserve Ben Avery Shooting Range."
- "Need to have controlled public access."
- "Advocate only those activities that have a minimal impact on the land, restrict use of ORV's and insure that natural resources are wisely and sustainably managed."
- "Build more horse trails and parking for horse trailers."
- "Controlled access"
- "Why would you close public land off to one use and not another and still call it public land?"
- "Do not allow the exterior properties to be sold and then close-off access to the public property by the private property landowners. Access lost to other public sites. e.g., Table Mesa Rd. to Lake Pleasant north end. Lock in public R/W [right of way] access across properties before sale of properties."

Summary:

The evidence and supporting documentation contained in this report would suggest that the recreational and scenic values of the Bradshaw-Harquahala planning area outweigh the need for community expansion and/or development as per Sec. 203 [43 USC 1713] (a) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA). Of particular importance to the communities of New River and Desert Hills for its scenic and recreational value is the land just west of I-17, north of Carefree Highway and South of Black Canyon City and the parcel located east of I-17, north of New River Rd.

Additionally, NR-DHCA recommends that the 1-17 corridor land currently designated as "disposable" (based on the 1988 Phoenix Resource Management Plan) be removed from that list and reclassified by the BLM for public multi-use. This land encompasses the area approximately from New River Road to approximately 1-1/2 miles north of Black Canyon City, east to the base of the Aqua Fria Monument and as far west as the base of the Bradshaw Mountains. This does not include the small parcel that is currently being transferred to Maricopa County for the New River Kiwanis club and Senior Center.

This recommendation is also in keeping with the BLM guidelines set forth in "Bio-diversity on Federal Lands: Report of a Keystone Policy Dialogue" in order to "sustain the health of ecological systems, to provide for human well-being and because of its intrinsic value". This would protect the views as well as the watershed and the aquifer that our residents depend on to survive.

In terms of off-road trails, each trail needs to be identified for recreational uses and an analysis of the cumulative impact of those uses needs to be made. Particularly in the area of motorized, off-road vehicles whereby some trails may need to be restricted. All non-restricted trails should be easily accessible to the general public and designated and maintained as such. Controlled but

guaranteed public access on all federal lands must be a prime consideration. The residents prefer that no additional charge be levied for this access as public lands are already supported by our taxes.

Trash and litter continue to be a problem and will require monitoring by users, enforcement by the BLM and cooperation with identified user groups and organizations to implement a workable solution.

Sound range management practices should be implemented that are showing effects of over-grazing. Grazing leases should be restricted in those areas that are historically, culturally, or environmentally sensitive. Restoration and/or revegetation efforts should focus on the areas that have been subjected to the most damage, in cooperation with the ranchers.

Special care and attention should be given to (1) cultural/historical sites to preserve/maintain their integrity, (2) inventories of plant and animal species are needed to aide in designation of additional wilderness areas and wildlife corridors for the protection and/or viewing of wildlife, and (3) ecologically sensitive riparian areas with wild and scenic river designations for the continued benefit of current and future generations.

**Attachment
[A]**



September 10, 7:30 PM Meeting

Desert Valley Baptist Church, 42425 N. New River Rd., New River

Speakers:

- ◆ Chris Horyza – BLM Phoenix Field Office Planning Coordinator
- ◆ Randy Goodfriend – Black Canyon City Community Association

Topic:

US Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Resource Management Plan
for the
Agua Fria National Monument and the Bradshaw Foothills

Why should you be involved?

We want BLM to consider:

- What we value about these public lands and why
- What activities or uses on these public lands are important and why
- How we would like to see the scientific, traditional, recreational, cultural, and natural resources of these areas managed

Attachment

[B]

BRADSHAW FOOTHILLS AREA LAND USE OPINION SURVEY

Please answer following questions and return your answers to any NR-DHCA board member, behomes@attglobal.net, or AZ_AFNM_Bradshaw@blm.gov

Reply by 11-13-02.

This area covers the **BLM lands** north of Phoenix -- the Bradshaw Foothills that include the Black Canyon Corridor and the areas around Lake Pleasant and Wickenburg.

Name: _____

Number of years living in the New River-Desert Hills area: _____

1. What do you value about these public lands and why?

2. What activities or uses do you NOT want on these public lands and why?

3. Check the activities/uses that you have been involved with on these lands.

<input type="checkbox"/> Off-road vehicle	<input type="checkbox"/> Equestrian
<input type="checkbox"/> Quad/dirt bike riding	<input type="checkbox"/> Mountain Biking
<input type="checkbox"/> Hunting	<input type="checkbox"/> Hiking
<input type="checkbox"/> Fishing,	<input type="checkbox"/> Native American sites
<input type="checkbox"/> Grazing	<input type="checkbox"/> Camping
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial mining	<input type="checkbox"/> Picnicking
<input type="checkbox"/> Recreational prospecting/mining	<input type="checkbox"/> Wild life viewing
<input type="checkbox"/> Photography	<input type="checkbox"/> Rock Hounding/gathering
<input type="checkbox"/> Historical sites	<input type="checkbox"/> Plant gathering – specimens/subsistence
<input type="checkbox"/> Star gazing/amateur astronomy	<input type="checkbox"/> Sunbathing
<input type="checkbox"/> Scouting events	<input type="checkbox"/> Nature walks – educational
<input type="checkbox"/> Bird watching	<input type="checkbox"/> Swimming
<input type="checkbox"/> Plinking/target shooting	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

4. For more comments, please use the other side of this paper.